UNITED STATES |DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Most or Flanagan - Interior 5634

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MARKET HUNTERS RECEIVE HEAVY FINES, SENTENCES

Of the 161 persons apprehended in last spring's five-State market hunting crackdown, 70 have been convicted and sentenced, 27 are yet to be sentenced, 52 await trial, 2 were acquitted, and 10 were dismissed, the Department of the Interior announced today.

The 70 persons who have been sentenced received fines ranging from \$1.00 to \$500 and jail sentences of 30 days to 6 months and 1 day. The 10 cases dismissed were against women or minors.

The mass arrests, which started at dawn May 5, 1961, charged the 161 persons-residents of Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, and Arkansas--with illegal possession, transportation, and sale of migratory waterfowl and resident game. Forty-five Federal Game Management Agents from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, together with Conservation Officers from the five States involved, took part in what proved to be the Nation's biggest raid of its type.

Most arrests were made in Louisiana, where 81 warrants were issued. All these defendants have been arraigned, but only two cases have been completed. The two pleaded guilty and were fined \$100 and \$250. Jury trials are pending for 48, and the Government has dismissed charges against 4 of the women arrested in Louisiana. Twenty-seven others, who also pleaded guilty, await sentencing.

Arkansas had the second highest number of arrests among the five States. Of the 54 arrested, I was acquitted, I was dismissed on motion of the Government, and the remaining were fined, given jail sentences, or placed on probation after having either pleaded guilty or been found guilty by a jury. The maximum fine in Arkansas was \$500 and the longest jail sentence was 181 days.

There were 15 cases in Maryland with 8 receiving fines up to \$500. Two cases are pending, and five were dismissed.

Of the six cases in Virginia, two were tried and found guilty, two pleaded guilty, one was acquitted, and one remains to be tried. One person was sentenced to one year. All other jail sentences were suspended.

North Carolina had five cases. Three of these pleaded guilty and were fined, one was given a one-year jail sentence, and one is awaiting trial.

Evidence gathered over a period of two and a half years through undercover operations by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife's Criminal Investigator led to the roundup. More than 5,000 wild ducks and geese were purchased for evidence by the undercover agent who posed as a peanut salesman during the operation.

The investigation by the Bureau resulted from numerous complaints that market hunting was prevalent and had reached serious proportions in certain areas.

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